

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
REMOTE VIA ZOOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021

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Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM by remote participation via Zoom

- **Montague Finance Committee members:** Jen Audley, Greg Garrison, Chris Menegoni, Francia Wisnewski, Jennifer Waryas, and John Hanold.
- **Absent:** Fred Bowman
- **Montague Selectboard member:** Chris Boutwell
- **Absent:** Rich Kuklewicz and Michael Nelson
- **Others:** Montague Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Airport Manager Bryan Camden, and Airport Commission members Seth Rutherford and Joe Majeski

The Chair announced that the meeting is being streamed and recorded by the MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one else was recording the meeting. Remote participation for both members and the public was provided by Zoom. The link to the recording is <https://vimeo.com/522370628>.

Approve Meeting Minutes

February 17 and 24 and March 3, 2021 (Finance Committee meetings)

Finance Committee Moved: To approve the minutes of February 17 and 24 and March 3, 2021 as submitted.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

February 22, 2021 (Selectboard meeting)

Finance Committee Moved: To approve the minutes of February 22 as submitted.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

Debrief February 25, 2021 Special Town Meeting

Ms. Audley asked our Committee for its impressions of the conduct of the Special Town Meeting. Mr. Garrison felt the discussion of the Airport purchase was cut short, and Ms. Audley noted that Information Technology and Airport issues for FY2022 will come up again at the Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Wisnewski mentioned Jeff Singleton's expressed concerns about the contributions of the Finance Committee at town meetings, and Ms. Audley said she felt that concern had been addressed when, as we planned prior to the event, Finance Committee members made statements in support of articles and answered questions from the floor.

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Updates on Annual Town Meeting Plans

Ms. Audley reported that the Selectboard, at their March 8 meeting, discussed various alternative approaches to the Annual meeting in May. These included splitting it into two meetings, delaying it until later in May, and choosing remote vs. in-person attendance. Wendy Bogusz was asked to survey Town Meeting members to solicit opinions.

Committee opinions favored continuing our schedule to support a May 1 meeting. There was general agreement that grouping the consideration of related Special Articles, as was done in May 2020, was a success and would shorten the meeting.

Result of DPW Staffing Discussions – March 8, 2021 Selectboard Meeting

Ms. Audley reported that Superintendent Tom Bergeron has revised his 2022 Budget request to delete the two requested additional Grounds employees in department 652. He proposes instead to add \$6,000 to Part-time Temp Wages (same department) and \$10,000 to Tree Removal (department 299 Tree Warden). These two increases were offset by level funding the Snow & Ice budget (saving \$9,000) and reducing the DPW main budget for diesel by \$7,000.

Reserve Fund Transfer: General Insurance Department (FY2021)

The billing for 8-20 Canal Street is converting from annual to semi-annual payments. We already paid one 6-month bill in FY2021, and the first 12-month bill will be coming in May, resulting in a budget shortfall of under \$2,000. Carolyn Olsen asked the Committee for its preference, given a choice between a Reserve Fund transfer, vs. a Special Town Meeting article before the Annual Town Meeting, and sentiment strongly favored a Reserve Fund transfer. The actual request will come at a later meeting.

Review of FY 2022 Budget Requests

Airport (Department 482) Mr. Camden updated the Committee on the progress toward consummating the purchase of Pioneer Aviation:

- A final Purchase & Sale agreement is in work, for \$1.43 million, with completion expected next week. No other bidders have appeared.
- Title search and environmental inspection are complete
- Mr. Garrison inquired about the status and transfer of leases. Aircraft storage leases are month-to-month, as are Aircraft Maintenance and Flight Training services. Mr. Camden will gradually convert them to annual leases, where justified and accepted, and offer a small discount to aircraft storage tenants for up-front annual payments.
- Ms. Audley asked for more information about the timing of when the Airport expects to bring in Revenue in FY2022 and whether there are planned Expenses that could be deferred until later in FY2022.

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Finance Committee Moved: To approve Airport combined budget of \$206,164.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

General Insurance (Department 946)

The increase from FY2021 to FY2022 is justified by overlapping coverage of the old DPW garage.

Finance Committee Moved: To approve General Insurance FY22 budget of \$115,000.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

Board of Health (Department 511)

Mr. Wasiuk had no amendments to make, so did not attend. Prior to voting Mr. Hanold, Ms. Audley, and Ms. Waryas expressed concern about the lack of a description of Public Health Nurse services after the surge of COVID-related efforts has subsided. With the expansion of the Nurse's hours from 4 to 12 per week, further justification for the benefits to the town of staffing this role with a consultant may be needed, as well. Mr. Boutwell – in his role as Board of Health member – was asked to convey this concern to Mr. Wasiuk.

Finance Committee Moved: To approve Board of Health FY2022 budget of \$161,907.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

Emergency Management (Department 291)

Mr. Zellmann has re-submitted his request, The amended request adheres to the stipend-review schedule

Finance Committee Moved: To approve Emergency Management FY2022 budget of \$6,265.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

Water Pollution Control Facility (Department 661)

Ms. Little answered questions on the WPCF capital plan, indicating that more effort will be expended in its creation when her responses to Administrative Orders from the federal Environmental Protection Agency are complete. Appropriations at the February 25 Special Town Meeting are a part of her response.

At a previous meeting, the Selectboard (acting as the Personnel Board) discussed and voted in support of the WPCF request to increase its Admin Assistant to full-time.

The WPCF Superintendent's request to budget for a surplus in the enterprise fund's retained earnings line was discussed.

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Finance Committee Moved: To approve WPCF FY2022 budget of \$2,587,169.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

Review of FY22 Capital Requests

Mr. Garrison confirmed that the Capital Improvements Committee has finished its investigations and voting, and is completing its report for a March 17 meeting. In general, all projects currently included in the FY2022 Budget file will be recommended, with some refinements possible. Their report will be the main topic on our March 17 agenda.

Topics Not Anticipated within 48 Hours and Requests for Future Agendas

No late news items were raised.

Agendas for Future Meetings

March 17 -- Capital Improvements Committee Report

March 24 – Discussion of Reserves, Balancing the budget

March 31 – Review of 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Adjournment

Montague Finance Committee Moved: To adjourn at 7:49 PM.

Vote: Audley-Aye, Hanold-Aye, Garrison-Aye, Wisnewski-Aye, Menegoni-Aye, Waryas-Aye

Respectfully submitted by John Hanold

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- FY2022 Budget requests